



Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as The Alexandria Times and Advertiser

Out of the Attic

Alexandria celebrates George Washington

Alexandria Times, February 13, 2020

Image: Reenactors in the George Washington Birthday Parade. Courtesy, George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee.

Mayor Justin Wilson issued a proclamation on Tuesday naming February the “George Washington Birthday Celebration Month” – and for good reason. It’s almost impossible to live in Alexandria without hearing of one of the many events that the George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee sponsors or promotes.

Since the late 18th century, Alexandrians have been celebrating their fellow citizen and First President George Washington with feasts, balls and parades. This tradition continues, as many organizations and locations related to Washington are still around. Today, residents can celebrate the birth of this revolutionary-era hero in a variety of ways.

Gadsby’s Tavern hosts its famous Birthnight Banquet & Ball – a re-creation of a celebration which Washington attended in 1799 – on Feb. 15. Many guests and re-enactors take this event seriously and dress up in late 18th and early 19th century attire and dance the night away after a fine banquet. Don’t know 18th century dances? Gadsby’s hires professional instructors and offers classes leading up to the event.

The George Washington Masonic National Memorial holds an annual symposium where speakers travel from around the country to discuss various topics related to George Washington.

This year’s symposium, “George Washington’s Construction of the United States Capitol,” is free to attend, and the Memorial has ample parking. The event is on Feb. 22 and starts at 1 p.m. Immediately afterward, masons from around the country enjoy the George Washington Birthday Gala, a white tie optional event, where the keynote speaker from the earlier symposium gives a second speech.

Every Sunday this month there will be a free tour of Washington-related locations starting at 2 p.m. behind the Torpedo Factory.

The peak of the city’s celebration is the annual Washington Birthday Parade, where thousands come to enjoy the country’s largest parade celebrating our greatest patriot. In addition to the two-hour parade, many museums and historic sites throughout Old Town are open and offer free admission for the day.





Office of Historic Alexandria City of Alexandria, Virginia

These are only some of the events, so please check the city's calendar or visit Washingtonbirthday.com for all the events. From restaurant hopping – tasting cherry meals and drinks at various establishments – to sitting across from “General Washington” telling stories to children, the City of Alexandria has plenty for all to enjoy.

“Out of the Attic” is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as “Marking Time” and explored Alexandria’s history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into “Out of the Attic” and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.

These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by staff of the Office of Historic Alexandria.